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Senate

The Senate met at 9:30 a.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. HATCH).

PRAYER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. Our visiting Chaplain this day is the Reverend Ralph E. Williamson, senior pastor of First African Methodist Episcopal Church in Las Vegas, NV. He will lead us in prayer.

The guest Chaplain offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Most gracious Master and our God, who has safely brought us to another day, grant these elected men and women in the United States Senate wisdom and Your divine guidance as they seek to take care of the business of this Nation. May Your invisible presence watch over and refresh their minds, encourage their thoughts, and invigorate their spirits to find the peaceful solutions and excellence for which they were elected. Allow every moment to serve as an opportunity to resolve their differences and move our great Nation forward.

We pray in the Name of God, the Creator and Sustainer of us all. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDENT pro tempore. The majority leader is recognized.

LYNCH NOMINATION AND HUMAN TRAFFICKING LEGISLATION

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, today we will be considering the Presi-

dent's nominee for Attorney General, Loretta Lynch. Last month I said the Senate would consider this nominee as soon as we passed an all-important antislavery bill, and today we will consider the nominee. We could not have been more pleased to see the legislation, the Justice for Victims of Trafficking Act pass by an overwhelming majority of 99 to 0, yesterday.

Senator CORNYN and the entire Republican conference made this antislavery bill a priority because the suffering of these victims is simply unconscionable. As the new majority, we decided these victims had waited long enough. We wanted to make it an early legislative priority. It was time to act and finally to give the victims of modern slavery the help and hope they have long waited for.

Now, we can finally say that help is on the way. Victims, advocates, and all the Members of this body who negotiated in good faith, and Senator CORNYN in particular, who never gave up, should take heart in yesterday's outcome. I would urge the House and the President to enact this bill quickly.

TRADE PROMOTION AUTHORITY

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on another matter, last night we saw the latest example of committees getting back to work in a new Congress—getting back to work for the American people. The Finance Committee passed an important bipartisan bill, trade promotion authority, with broad support from both parties, 20 to 6—20 to 6. The chairman and ranking member of that committee, Senator HATCH and Senator WYDEN, worked hard to achieve the result we saw last night.

Along with Chairman RYAN in the House, they put together an agreement that reflects the kind of honest compromise they can take pride in. It protects and enhances the role of Congress in the trade negotiating process, while ensuring that Presidents of either

party—and I would remind our colleagues that this is a 6-year trade promotion authority bill. It will give to the next President the opportunity to negotiate additional trade agreements and send them to Congress for approval.

These agreements can boost our economy and support more high-quality American jobs. Now, this bipartisan bill will move to the Senate floor. It is my hope to pass it during the current work period.

IRAN NUCLEAR AGREEMENT REVIEW ACT

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, on the topic of committees getting back to work in the new Congress, we witnessed more evidence of that last week when the Senate Foreign Relations Committee unanimously approved the bipartisan Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act. It is a bipartisan bill with many Republican and Democratic cosponsors. It will ensure the American people are given a voice on one of the most important issues of our time.

Chairman CORKER worked closely with Members of both parties both to craft a compromise bill and to advance it. Many have admired not just his hard work on this issue but his determination as well. After all, who would have imagined that the White House, after trying to kill this bipartisan bill for months, would find itself forced to pull a near-total about-face. It is no wonder, though, because the core principle that has always underlined the Iran Nuclear Agreement Review Act—that Congress and the American people deserve a say in any nuclear deal that the President tries to cut with Iran—is more than just common sense. It is really a no-brainer.

After all, preventing the world's foremost state sponsor of terrorism from gaining access to nuclear weapons should be the goal of every Senator and every American, regardless of party. It

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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